

## A MESSAGE FROM THE RABBIS

Dear Friends,

Yesterday's vote at the UN on Palestinian membership was a day which will go down in history, although what history will write about it only time will tell.

In this week's Parashat Vayishlach, Jacob battles with the angel and earns the name Israel. It is the first time we are recognized as the people of Israel. Our own struggles were rewarded exactly 65 years ago on 29 November 1947 with the UN partition plan that acknowledged the right of the Jewish people to an independent state.



The Parasha also tells us how Jacob prepares to meet his brother Esau again, 20 years after fleeing from him. The risks are real - Esau has threatened to kill him. This meeting is the biblical prototype of confrontation between Israel and the nations. Before the meeting with Esau, Jacob prepares in three ways: he divides his camp in two, he prays to God, and he sends Esau gifts and conciliatory messages. These three tactics mirror the basic strategies that Israel has at its disposal: preparation for battle, prayer, and diplomacy.

We as a nation have had to rely on all three at different times. Today we feel it is critical that we remember the crucial role that diplomacy played in achieving independence for the State of Israel.

The vote at the UN yesterday is a great moment for us as citizens of the world. This is an opportunity to celebrate the process that allows a nation to come forward and ask for recognition. Having gained independence ourselves in this way, we are especially conscious of this. Every people has the right of recognition, every person has the right of recognition.

As Jews deeply committed to the security and democracy of Israel, and in light of the violence this past month in Gaza and Israel, we hope that November 29, 2012 will mark the moment that brought about a needed sense of dignity and purpose to the Palestinian people, led to a cessation of violence and hastened the two state solution.

We continue to pray for a lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors.

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